



International Exchange Alumni Toolkit:

A guide for empowering, inspiring, and
connecting beyond your exchange





Dear alumni,

Congratulations on completing your exchange experience! We hope the time you spent overseas broadened your horizons, deepened your knowledge, and resulted in making life-long friendships. Now that you have returned home, you should be energized and eager to build upon and transfer the important skills and experiences you gained abroad.

As alumni of a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program, you join an impressive network of more than one million individuals from around the world who have shared a similarly transformative experience. This dynamic group of leaders and influencers are working on innovative projects using the knowledge and skills they developed during their exchange programs to benefit their local communities and find solutions to shared global challenges.

This toolkit aims to facilitate your transition home, provide tips on staying connected with the extensive alumni network, and help you make a meaningful impact in your communities and around the world.

No matter what your background or the kind of exchange program in which you took part, you share a rare first-hand opportunity to cross boundaries and build bridges between cultures. As members of the International Exchange Alumni family, you are poised to inspire Americans and other people around the world to continue down the path of friendship and mutual understanding. We look forward to working with you to continue your exchange journey!

Sincerely,

The International Exchange Alumni Team

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STAYING CONNECTED



The U.S. Department of State's [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Division \(ECA\)](#) sponsors a wide variety of educational, cultural, and professional exchange programs around the world. The programs listed below represent a small sampling of the many opportunities for American citizens to go abroad each year. As a participant in one of these programs, you are invited and encouraged to take advantage of the vast alumni network using the resources discussed in more detail in the remainder of this toolkit.

	<u>Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program</u>	Sends approximately 800 American scholars and professionals per year to approximately 130 countries, where they lecture and/or conduct research in a wide variety of academic and professional fields
	<u>Fulbright U.S. Student Program</u>	Offers fellowships for U.S. graduating college seniors, graduate students, and young professionals and artists to study, conduct research, and/or teach English Abroad
	<u>Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program</u>	Provides scholarships to U.S. undergraduates with financial need for study abroad. Provides up to \$8,000 for American students to pursue study or internships for college credit
	<u>Critical Language Scholarships (CLS) Program</u>	Provides overseas foreign language instruction and cultural enrichment experiences in 13 critical languages for U.S. students in higher education
	<u>National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)</u>	High school exchange program where students learn less-commonly studied foreign languages through overseas summer and academic year programs
	<u>American Council of Youth Political Leaders (ACYPL)</u>	Focuses on international exchange for young political leaders worldwide. Provides in-depth exploration of the governance, politics, policy-making, culture, and geographic diversity of the host country
	<u>Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX)</u>	Offers American and German high school students a fully-funded academic year abroad.
	<u>American Youth Leadership Program</u>	A 3-4 week leadership training exchange program for U.S. high school students and adult mentors. Programs involve homestays with local families, language lessons, leadership training, and community service opportunities.
	<u>Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Abroad</u>	American high school students spend 10 months in selected countries during the academic year. Students live with host families, attend high school, and help educate others about American culture while learning about their host country.

For a full list of ECA-sponsored exchange programs for American citizens, including numerous cultural programs and English teaching opportunities, please visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/alphabetical-list-programs>



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI

alumni.state.gov



CONNECT GLOBALLY:

Current and former participants of U.S. government-sponsored people-to-people exchange programs are eligible to join the [International Exchange Alumni](http://alumni.state.gov) website, an exclusive online community offering the following [membership benefits](#):

THE RESOURCES

The International Exchange Alumni website features valuable resources to support the personal and professional development of exchange alumni.

- 💰 Access the [\\$33 billion grants database](#) with funding opportunities from organizations around the world. Or [post your own grant opportunity](#) for alumni.
- 🔍 Read—or listen to—current events and the latest academic research through the [eLibrary](#) of more than 20,000 publications. Publications are often available in several languages.
- 📁 Search for [professional development](#) opportunities.
- 📧 Receive newsletters and updates about opportunities from the U.S. Department of State.

THE NETWORK

Use International Exchange Alumni to connect with alumni and share ideas:

- 👤 Connect with nearly [150,000 global alumni](#) already registered on the website. Also find [alumni associations](#) by country.
- 🗣️ Post [alumni updates](#) to share alumni-related news with your alumni.
- 📅 Search [events](#) posted by other site members or share an event that you are organizing.

Visit alumni.state.gov today to check out your International Exchange Alumni website

CONNECT VIRTUALLY:

You can also connect with the global alumni community through social media:



“Like” [International Exchange Alumni](#) on [Facebook](#) to receive updates on upcoming opportunities, notable alumni stories, and interesting stories.



Use our [#ExchangeAlumni](#) hashtag when you tweet about an alumni activity or accomplishment resulting from your exchange. Your tweet will show up in a real-time stream of #ExchangeAlumni tweets about what alumni are doing all over the globe



Visit our official [International Exchange Alumni Tumblr](#) page for even more alumni announcements, stories, and multimedia

Many individual exchange programs have their own social media sites, so check with your program provider for even more opportunities to connect online.

CONNECT LOCALLY:

Formal alumni associations, alumni chapters, alumni ambassadors, and informal groupings of U.S. government-sponsored exchange program alumni exist across the United States. Although the structure and mission of these alumni groups may differ, they all offer an opportunity to connect and network with individuals who participated in a similar international experience. Many also offer opportunities for community service, continued language exchange, professional development, program promotion, or other ways to expand upon or share your own exchange experience. Although many of these alumni associations are program-specific, most welcome and often invite alumni of other programs to connect and take part in many of their activities.

The associations below are two examples of more formal exchange alumni associations:

- [Fulbright Association](#): The Fulbright Association aims to continue the Fulbright Program experience by promoting opportunities for life-long learning, collaborative networking, and service at home and abroad for Fulbright Program alumni and supporters. The Fulbright Association currently has approximately 6,000 individual members, as well as 174 institutional members. There are 60+ local affiliate chapters throughout the country.



- To see whether there is a local Fulbright alumni chapter in your area, visit the Association's [chapter selection page](#).

- **[NSLI-Y Alumni Association](#)**: The NSLI-Y Alumni Association strives to foster an alumni network by providing resources for continued language acquisition, professional development, and service to strengthen international dialogue and intercultural understanding.



- The NSLI-Y Alumni Association is led by **[NSLI-Y Alumni Representatives](#)** who are responsible for engaging alumni in their respective regions across the U.S. in events and opportunities pertaining to continued language learning, professional development, networking, and community service.
- For a list of the current NSLI-Y Alumni Representatives and information on how to contact them, please click [here](#).

If you are interested in starting an alumni association, chapter, or group for your own program or region, please contact exchangealumni@state.gov for tips and ideas.





SHARING YOUR STORY



Now that you have returned home from your exchange program, you are likely eager to share what you experienced and learned during your exchange program with your family, friends, and peers. Below are some tips and ideas for how you can tell your story.

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR OPPORTUNITIES:




Many programs offer “Alumni Ambassador” opportunities, which allow you to represent and promote your program to future potential applicants. This is a great way to inspire the next generation of U.S. government exchange program participants alumni or share your own international experiences with your community.

	Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors	<p>The Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors program intends to identify, train, and engage a select group of approximately 15 Fulbright U.S. Student Program alumni to serve as representatives and spokespersons for the Fulbright Program. Alumni Ambassadors provide testimonials about their experiences at conferences and campus presentations, mentor potential applicants, etc. http://us.fulbrightonline.org/alumni/alumni-ambassadors</p>
	Gilman Alumni Ambassadors	<p>The Gilman Alumni Ambassador program includes a diverse group of Gilman alumni who have studied or interned abroad in various countries around the world. They are official ambassadors of the Gilman Program, providing presentations and promotional outreach to university and college campuses around the nation to students and advisors interested in learning more about the Gilman Scholarship program. http://www.iie.org/programs/gilman-scholarship-program/about-the-program</p>
	NSLI-Y Alumni Representatives	<p>NSLI-Y Alumni Representatives are responsible for engaging alumni in their respective regions across the U.S. in events and opportunities. The Alumni Representatives lead the NSLI-Y Alumni Association, which strives to foster an alumni network by providing resources for continued language acquisition, professional development, and service to strengthen international dialogue and intercultural understanding. http://www.nsliforyouth.org/alumni/nsli-y-alumni-association/</p>
	CLS Program Alumni Ambassadors	<p>CLS Alumni Ambassadors are a select group of CLS alumni who volunteer to serve as representatives of the CLS program to various audiences. Typical activities may include general CLS and/or country-specific presentations, online forums, providing information to prospective CLS students, and speaking on alumni panels and pre-departure orientations. http://www.clscholarship.org/alumni</p>

OTHER IDEAS FOR TELLING YOUR STORY:

- **Write an editorial in your local newspaper or online publication:** Letters to the editor, blog posts, and opinion pieces are often great ways to tell the world about your exchange experience and promote study abroad and international awareness. The editorial section of a newspaper or newsletter is widely read by the public and can be an effective way to reach a large audience and spread the word about issues you care about.
 - **Where to submit:** Most local and online publications will include information on their website on how to submit an editorial. If you can't find it, try calling the paper or online publication directly and ask for the guidelines and contact info.
 - **School or trade association newsletters** are also good options to submit personal testimonials or op-ed-style pieces.
 - Please send links for any articles or blogs you write about your experience to exchangealumni@state.gov – we would be happy to help share your story!
 - Press release template for use by local media *coming soon*.
- **Give a presentation at schools, clubs, or community-based organizations:** Work with your local campus, school system, clubs, or community-based organizations to host presentations about your experience abroad. Think about bringing traditional food or clothing from your host country or featuring traditional music or crafts. Provide useful information about the types of study abroad opportunities available, particularly for non-traditional study abroad audiences.
 - **Example:** A NSLI-Y alumnus and 2014 Alumni Ambassador presented on his experience and study abroad opportunities to an audience of 1,600 students at the YMCA Model UN Conference. He included information about the NSLI-Y program as well as other USG-funded exchange opportunities, what he gained from the experience both personally and professionally, and how to host international students.
 - Sample presentation templates, information sheets, customizable Power Point presentations, and other promotional materials *coming soon*.
- **Share your story on social media:** One of the most effective ways to tell your story is through various social media outlets. Whether through your own social media pages, the pages of your specific exchange program, or through the International Exchange Alumni network, amplify the impact of your exchange by telling the world your story.

When posting to social media, be sure to use the following links and tags so that we can help spread your message:

Social Media Links		
 <p>Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs International Exchange Alumni Inspire · Empower · Connect alumni.state.gov</p>	<p>International Exchange Alumni</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official International Exchange Alumni Facebook page - Twitter: #ExchangeAlumni hashtag
 <p>BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS EXCHANGE PROGRAMS NON-U.S. CITIZENS U.S. CITIZENS</p>	<p>Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official U.S. Department of State Exchange Programs Facebook page - Twitter: @ECAatState Twitter page
	<p>Department of State</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official U.S. Department of State Facebook page - Twitter: @ StateDept Twitter page

GIVING BACK



Exchange program participants who return home often look for ways to stay involved and to build upon and share the skills, knowledge, and experiences they gained abroad. Below are some ideas about how you can stay connected to your exchange experience while assisting new exchange program participants or the wider community:

■ CONNECT WITH FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

GLOBALTIES > U.S.

Global Ties U.S. is a network of over 100 nonprofit organizations across 44 states and 13 countries that partner with the U. S. Department of State to coordinate exchange programs and connect leaders in U.S. communities with leaders from around the world. Community-based members of Global Ties U.S. are instrumental in planning activities for foreign exchange participants and helping to introduce their local communities to global audiences. They offer opportunities for volunteers to host, connect, or otherwise engage with the global community in your own backyard.

Examples of local opportunities include:

Philadelphia, PA: Citizen Diplomacy International’s “First Thursday” Reception

Citizen Diplomacy International’s (CDI) First Thursday receptions are a monthly opportunity for local citizens to welcome international guests to the U.S. and Philadelphia, practice language skills, make new local friends who share an international interest, and stay in touch with what’s happening internationally. All guests are identifiable by their country color-coded name badge. Returned Fulbright, Peace Corps, and other exchange alumni receive special ribbons that generate conversations about their experiences abroad. More information at http://cdiphila.org/first_thursday

Pensacola, FL: Gulf Coast Citizen Diplomacy Council Coffee Talks

The Gulf Coast Citizen Diplomacy Council facilitates community coffee shop discussions to engage international visitors with informal interaction and discussion with local residences. The coffees are regularly scheduled events open to members and interested community members. Depending on the interpretation needs of the visitors, the coffees are either small, intimate affairs or large events set in a rotating, speed networking style.

Boston, MA: WorldBoston WB2030 Program

World Boston has launched WB2030, a network for young professionals and students seeking to make valuable international connections and to access global expertise for career development. WB2013 offers exclusive access to expert speakers and State Department-sponsored international delegations in exciting networking opportunities, as well as social events such as international trivia nights. For more information, visit <http://worldboston.org/events.htm>

To get involved with programs like these and find a Global Ties U.S. community-based member near you, search the [Global Ties website](#) or browse a list of community-based members in each state [here](#).

If you are interested in volunteering with a Global Ties U.S. community-based member near you and connecting with participants of the International Visitor Leadership program and other exchange programs, you can also fill out the [simple form](#) available on the Global Ties U.S. website.

■ HOST AN EXCHANGE PARTICIPANT



*"When you spend time
with people from other
countries, your whole
world expands."
Michelle Kwan*



There are a wide variety of hosting opportunities and other ways of sharing your culture and hospitality with an international student, scholar, or professional. These include:

- [Sharing your home](#) with a student for the school year or semester
- [Hosting a teacher](#) during an international exchange
- Hosting a scholar, professional, or [international visitor](#) during a training or exchange
- Participating in [short-term hosting](#) options through the Global Ties Network:
 - o Sharing your home for an evening, a few days, or a week
 - o Hosting a dinner for an international visitor
 - o Meeting a group of participants out for dinner
 - o Picking up international participants at the airport
 - o Spending time with international visitors on the weekend.

Visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/hosting-volunteer-opportunities> for more information on hosting opportunities.

■ HELP RECRUIT NEW EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS

As an alumnus/alumna of a USG-sponsored exchange program, you are in the best position to help recruit future generations of International Exchange Alumni. Your own life-changing experiences will help inspire others to take advantage of a transformational exchange program. This is particularly important for those communities who may not otherwise hear about the wonderful opportunities available for international exploration. Your involvement in recruitment can take many forms. Below are just a few ways that you can help to recruit new exchange participants:

- Become an “Alumni Ambassador” for your individual exchange program. See [page 8](#) for more details.
- Offer to give a presentation at a local university or high school
- Staff an informational table at local career or study abroad fairs
- Speak with or mentor current or future applicants
- Sharing your experiences with students in a classroom

Sample presentation templates, information sheets, customizable PowerPoint presentations, and other promotional materials *coming soon*.

■ MENTOR FUTURE APPLICANTS OR LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Mentoring others can be a great way to broaden the impact of your exchange, establish yourself as a leader, and build your network. There are three primary models we recommend:

1. MODEL 1: MENTORING FUTURE EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS

- Provide advice and mentoring to **aspiring exchange-program participants** or other **students interested in studying abroad**.
 - If available, get in touch with the scholars program office at your local school or university and express your willingness and availability to mentor potential applicants for U.S. government (USG)-sponsored programs. You can also contact the university’s study abroad office for opportunities to peer-advise potential applicants.

2. MODEL 2: MENTORING RECENTLY RETURNED EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS

- Once you return to the U.S. and settle in your career or next step, you may wish to meet or mentor **recently returned exchange participants**. Many newly returned alumni seek advice on finding jobs, remaining connected to their exchange experience, and settling into a new community. It is also a great opportunity to talk about commonly shared experiences, reminisce, and develop projects to showcase your exchange to the local community.
 - Contact the local alumni association chapters, check the alumni directory on the International Exchange Alumni website, or tune into social media groups to find about recently returning alumni in your area.

3. MODEL 3: MENTORING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- There are a number of ways you can translate your exchange experience into a meaningful mentorship opportunity with the **local community**. Examples include:
 - Mentoring **students** in the community, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who might not otherwise hear about study abroad opportunities.
 - Organizing **events around a theme** (i.e. the value of international experience, cultural activities from your host country) that allows individuals to ask questions, foster cultural understanding, or learn about opportunities available to them.
 - Mentoring **young professionals** on leadership, professional development, or skills development.

For more information on establishing a mentorship program or mentorship models, you may want to visit the [National Mentoring Partnership \(MENTOR\)](#), where you will find a number of resources and ideas for successful mentorship programs.

■ APPLY FOR OTHER USG-SPONSORED EXCHANGES

If you are eager to continue serving your country abroad or exploring the world as a citizen diplomat, the U.S. government sponsors a number of other exchange opportunities for consideration, including:

- **Peace Corps:** The Peace Corps has been a leader in international development and citizen diplomacy for more than 50 years across more than 139 countries. Visit the [Peace Corps Application Portal](#) for more information or to start an application for a two-year plus training program to help build capacity in the fields of education, health, youth, environment, economic development, and agriculture.
- **Boren Scholarships and Fellowships:** Boren Awards provide unique funding opportunities for U.S. undergraduates and graduate students to study less commonly taught languages in world regions critical to U.S. interests and often underrepresented in study abroad. Visit the [Boren Awards website](#) for more information and eligibility requirements.
- **U.S. Department of Education Grants:** The International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) office of the Department of Education provides institutional and fellowship grant funding to strengthen the capability and performance of American education in foreign languages and in areas of international studies. For more information, visit the [IFLE website](#).
- **Other ECA Exchanges:** Visit the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) [Exchange Programs website](#) to see if you are eligible to apply for other ECA-sponsored exchange programs.

■ CONSIDER A CAREER WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Are you considering a career with the Foreign Service? There are a number of resources online with tips and information on pursuing a career in the Foreign Service or taking the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT); we have listed a few resources below which you may want to look into as you explore the possibility of a career in the Foreign Service:

- Visit the Department of State's career [website](#) for more information about what's involved in joining the Foreign Service, a check-list to determine if joining the Foreign Service is right for you, the different career tracks you can consider, information about the Foreign Service Exam, and other resources. The site also outlines Civil Service careers, which provide a chance to contribute to America's foreign policy while sticking closer to home.
- Download the [DOSCareers](#) mobile app from the Apple Store or GooglePlay. The mobile app allows you to explore career options, find out about recruitment events, and practice for the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT).
- Talk with a **Diplomat in Residence**. Diplomats in Residence (DIRs) are career Foreign Service Officers who are located throughout the United States and are responsible for providing guidance and advice to students, professionals, and the community about U.S. Department of State careers. DIRs are available to answer questions and share insights with those interested in Foreign or Civil Service careers, internships, and fellowships. Find a DIR near you [here](#).
- **Available Fellowships and Student Programs:**
 - **Fellowships:** Both the [Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship](#) and the [Charles B. Rangel Graduate Fellowship](#) are funded by the U.S. Department of State and are designed to attract outstanding individuals from all ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds who are committed to pursuing a career in the Foreign Service. In addition to financial support to cover graduate schools studies, Pickering and Rangel Fellows receive mentoring and professional development as they prepare to enter the Foreign Service at the end of their studies.
 - **U.S. Department of State Student Programs:** The U.S. Department of State offers two programs for high school, undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students who are interested in working in a foreign affairs environment:
 - [U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program](#) (unpaid) Spring, summer, or fall: This program, for students with a minimum of 60 credit hours or greater, provides the opportunity to work in U.S. Embassies throughout the world, as

well as in various bureaus located in Washington, D.C. and State Department offices around the U.S.

- [Pathways Program](#) (paid): Includes three paid Civil Service programs located in the U.S. The Pathways Program includes an Internship Program for current students, a Recent Graduates Program for individuals who have graduated within two years, and the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program for advanced degree candidates.

CONCLUSION

We hope you have found some of the ideas presented in this toolkit helpful as you work to make the most out of your exchange experience and accelerate its impact in your local communities and around the world. We look forward to hearing about ways in which you have transferred some of the skills you gained abroad and continue your journey as an effective global citizen.

The State Department's Alumni Affairs Division has dedicated staff available to assist you as you share your story and extend your exchange experience. Please do not hesitate to contact us to share ideas, promote your successes and stories, or ask questions. Contact us at exchangealumni@state.gov.